



File Code: 1010
Date: January 22, 2015

Dear Rock Climbing Community:

It's the time of year to welcome back North Carolina's Peregrine Falcons. While the Peregrine Falcon was removed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species list in 1999, it remains listed as sensitive by the Regional Forester and endangered by the state of North Carolina. These designations continue to afford the peregrine falcon protection as the Forest Service and partner agencies work to conserve and protect the species.

Eight pairs of falcons nested on rock faces in western North Carolina in 2014, four of which were on Forest Service lands. Of the four pairs on the Forest, three nested successfully, producing a total of eight fledglings. Four additional territories on Forest Service lands were not occupied breeding pairs of falcons. This indicates that long-term reproductive success continues to be a concern. Young chicks startled prior to acquiring full flight capability will run off the edge of the cliff attempting to escape the threat. Entry into a closure site after the chicks have hatched, but before they can fly, will almost certainly cause this response.

Closure of the cliffs where peregrine falcons are nesting to climbing activities is necessary to limit disturbance during critical reproductive seasons. Climbers should be aware that both the adults and newly fledged chicks remain in the vicinity of the nest site, and may fly or dive at nearby climbers. It is unlawful to take (kill, harass, or injure, including eggs) peregrine falcons and other birds of prey (Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 USC 703-712).

Until such time as western North Carolina can maintain a healthy reproduction rate and successfully raise young peregrine falcons, the existing closures will be maintained, posted, and enforced.

Closure areas:

- Whitesides Mountain, Nantahala Ranger District
- Big Lost Cove Cliffs and Linville Gorge (Shortoff Mountain and NC Wall), Grandfather Ranger District
- Whiterock Cliff and Buzzard's Roost, Appalachian Ranger District
- Looking Glass Rock (north face) and Victory Wall, Pisgah Ranger District

Entry into or upon the areas defined above is prohibited between January 15 and August 15. Areas are defined by orange painted boundary *or* posted signs. This closure is in effect whether or not signs are present. Closure areas and contact information is provided on the attached summary.



Please contact Sheryl Bryan, Forest Wildlife Biologist (sbryan@fs.fed.us, 828-257-4271), with questions regarding these areas or if you would like a copy of the closure notice or maps. This information is also available at the ranger district offices listed on the attachment and at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc>. Thank you for your continued cooperation with restoration efforts for this magnificent bird of prey.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kristin Bail

KRISTIN BAIL

Forest Supervisor National Forests in North Carolina



2015 North Carolina Peregrine Falcon Climbing Site Closures

Site Name	Area Closed	Landowner
Whitesides Mountain	All climbing routes between and including Southwest Arete and Mainline are closed.	USFS, Nantahala Ranger District (828) 524-6441
NC Wall (Linville Gorge)	All climbing routes between and including Tighrope and Bumblebee Buttress are closed	USFS, Grandfather Ranger District (828) 652-2144
Shortoff Mountain (Linville Gorge)	All climbing routes between and including C.O. to and including Paradigm Shift are closed.	USFS, Grandfather Ranger District (828) 652-2144
Big Lost Cove Cliffs	All climbing routes are closed.	USFS, Grandfather Ranger District (828) 652-2144
Looking Glass Rock (North Face)	All routes to the right* of Glass Menagerie and to the left of and including Twisted Laurel on the North Face of Looking Glass Rock are closed.	USFS, Pisgah Ranger District (828) 877-3350
Victory Wall	All climbing routes are closed.	USFS, Pisgah Ranger District (828) 877-3380
Whiterock Cliff	All climbing routes are closed	USFS, Appalachian Ranger District (828) 682-6146
Buzzard's Roost**	All climbing routes are closed	USFS, Appalachian Ranger District (828) 682-6146

* As seen from the base of Looking Glass Rock

** New closure area in 2012

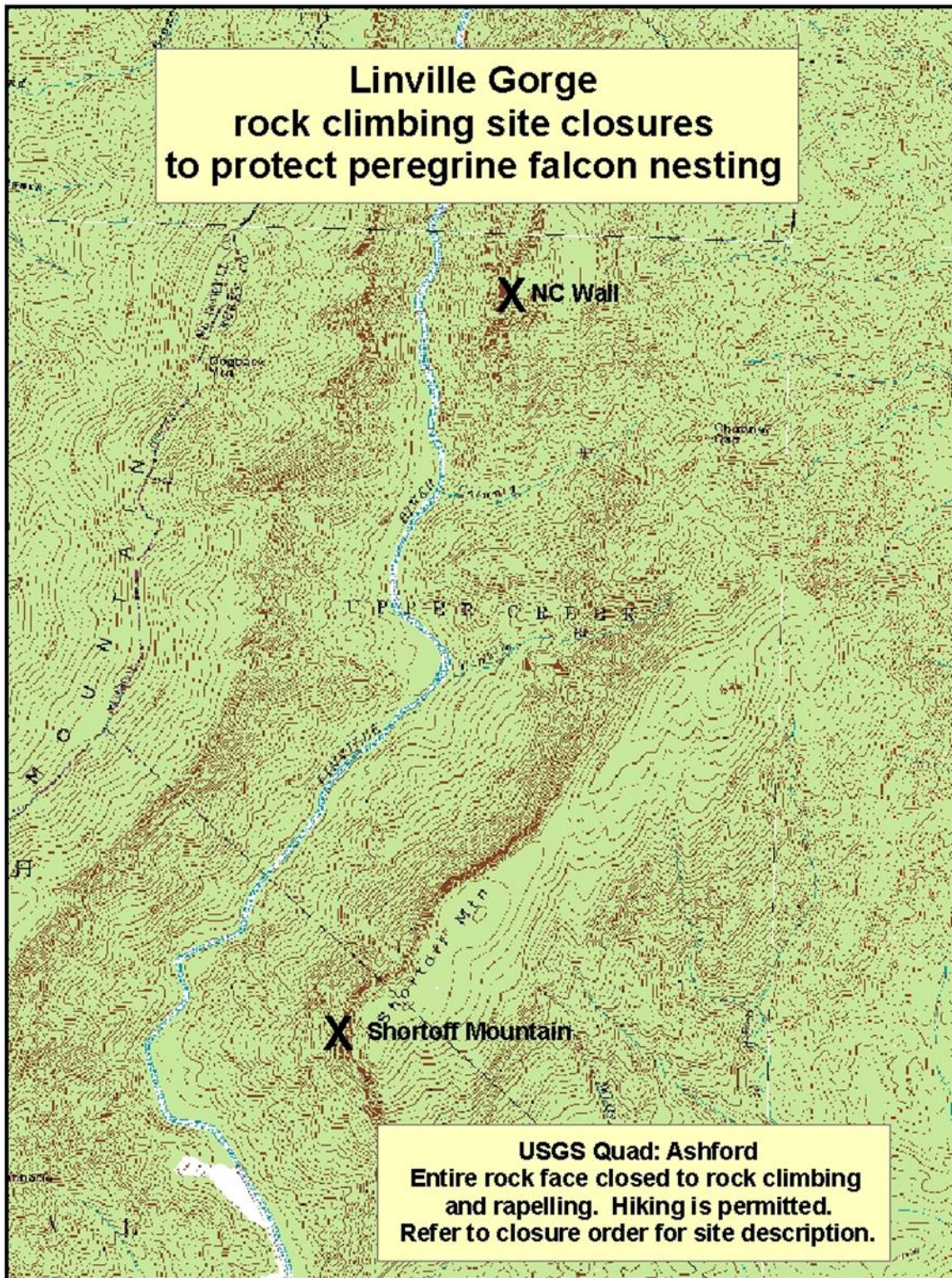
Climbing route names are taken from: Kelley, Thomas. 1995. The Climber's Guide to North Carolina 3rd Edition. Earthbound Sports Inc., Chapel Hill, NC 332pp. and from Lambert and Shull. 2002. Selected Climbs in North Carolina. 1st Edition. The Mountaineers Books. Seattle, WA. 326pp.

All sites are closed from January 15 - August 15; except that in the event that falcons are not using the site or nesting terminates at an earlier date than August 15th, the site may be opened to public use, as determined by the appropriate landowners. The specified closed (or open) routes will change if the falcons nest on a part of the cliff outside the existing closed area, or if they do not nest in an existing closed area, as determined by monitoring throughout the breeding season.

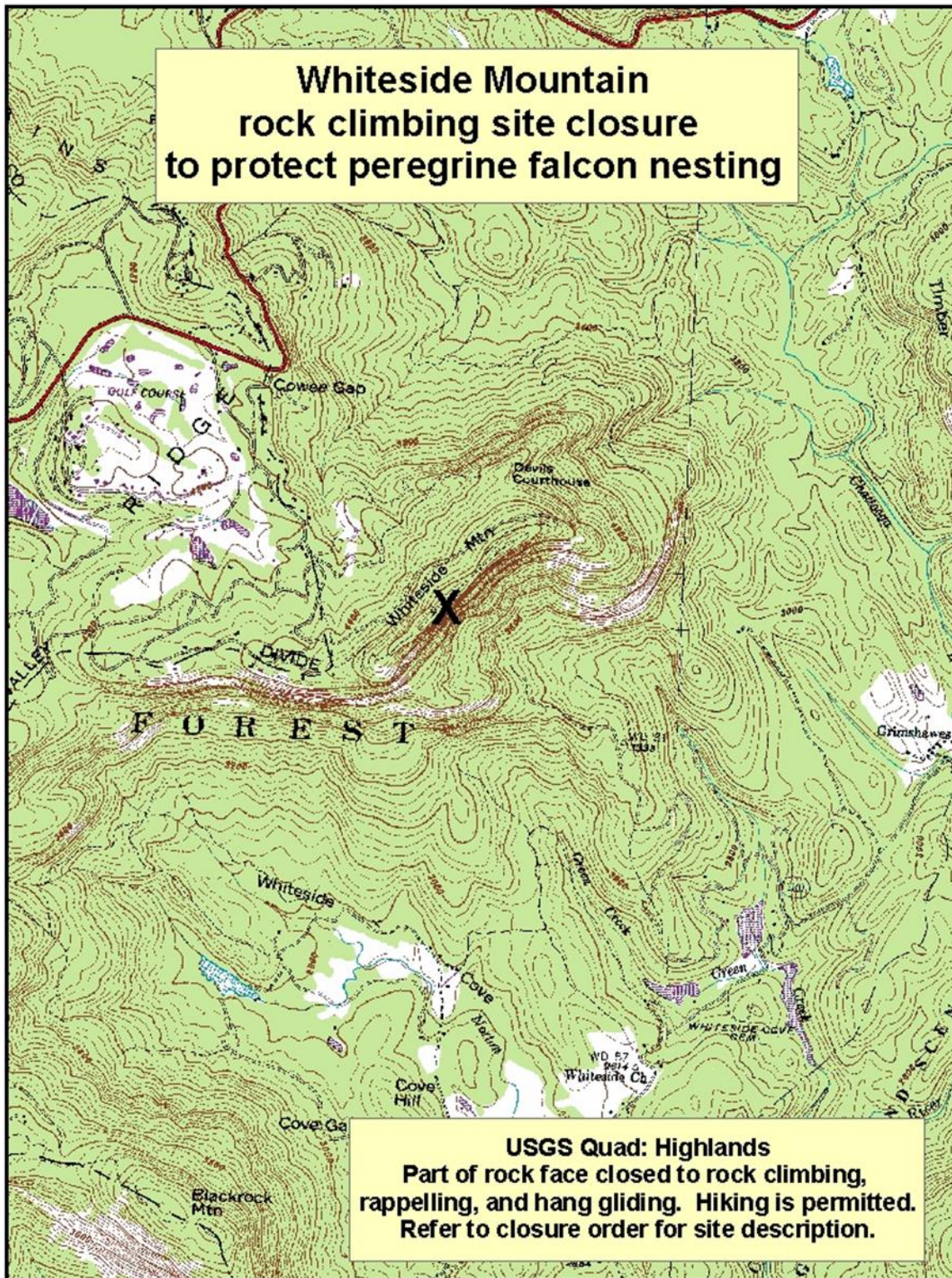
This summary of climbing-site closures represents the best available knowledge regarding closure orders issued by the U.S. Forest Service and North Carolina State Parks as compiled by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission works in collaboration with the above landowners to recommend closure areas that protect peregrine falcon nest sites and minimize restrictions on climbers. Changes in the specific closures and publication of the notices are the responsibility of the respective landowners.

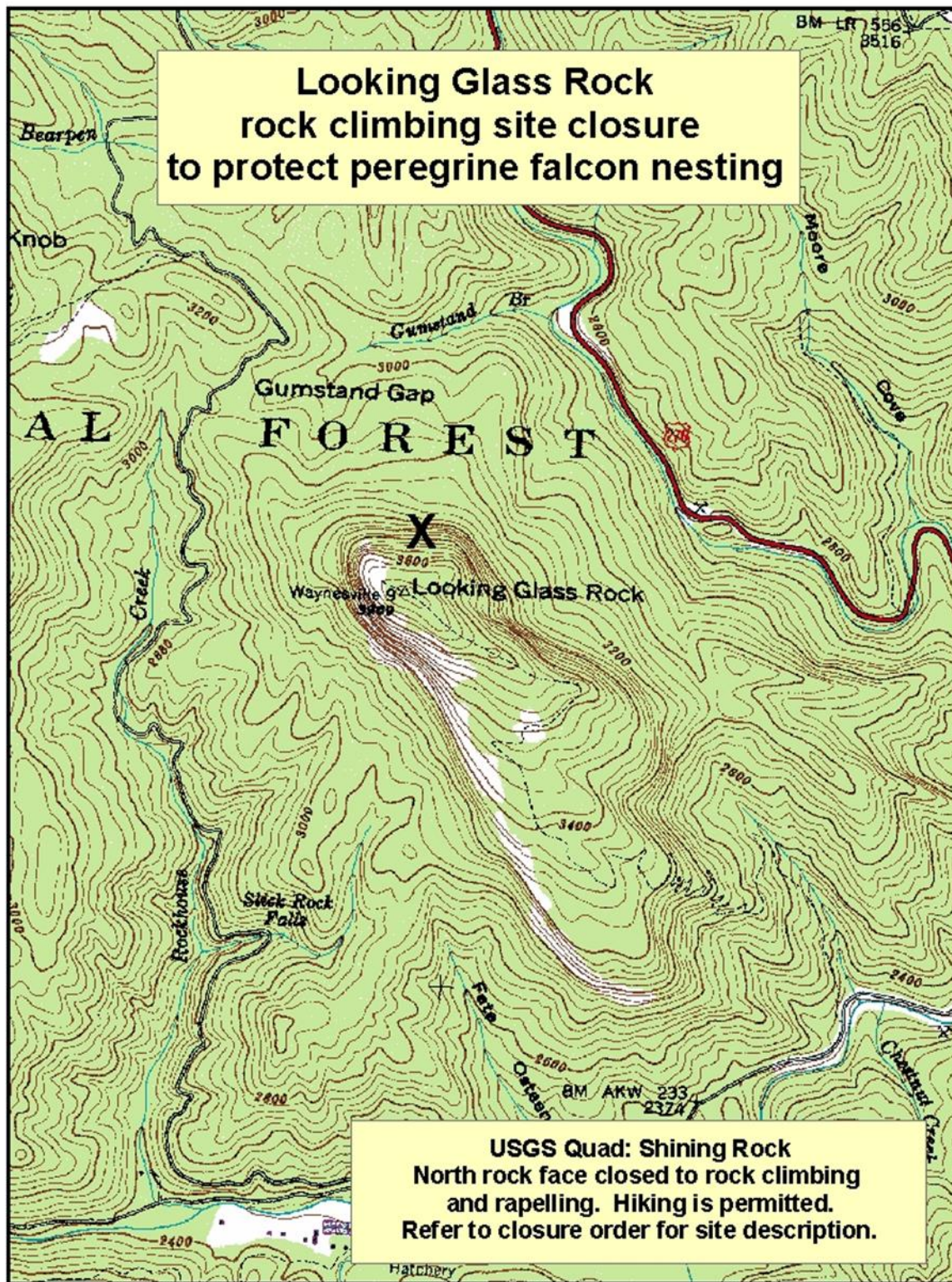


**Linville Gorge
rock climbing site closures
to protect peregrine falcon nesting**

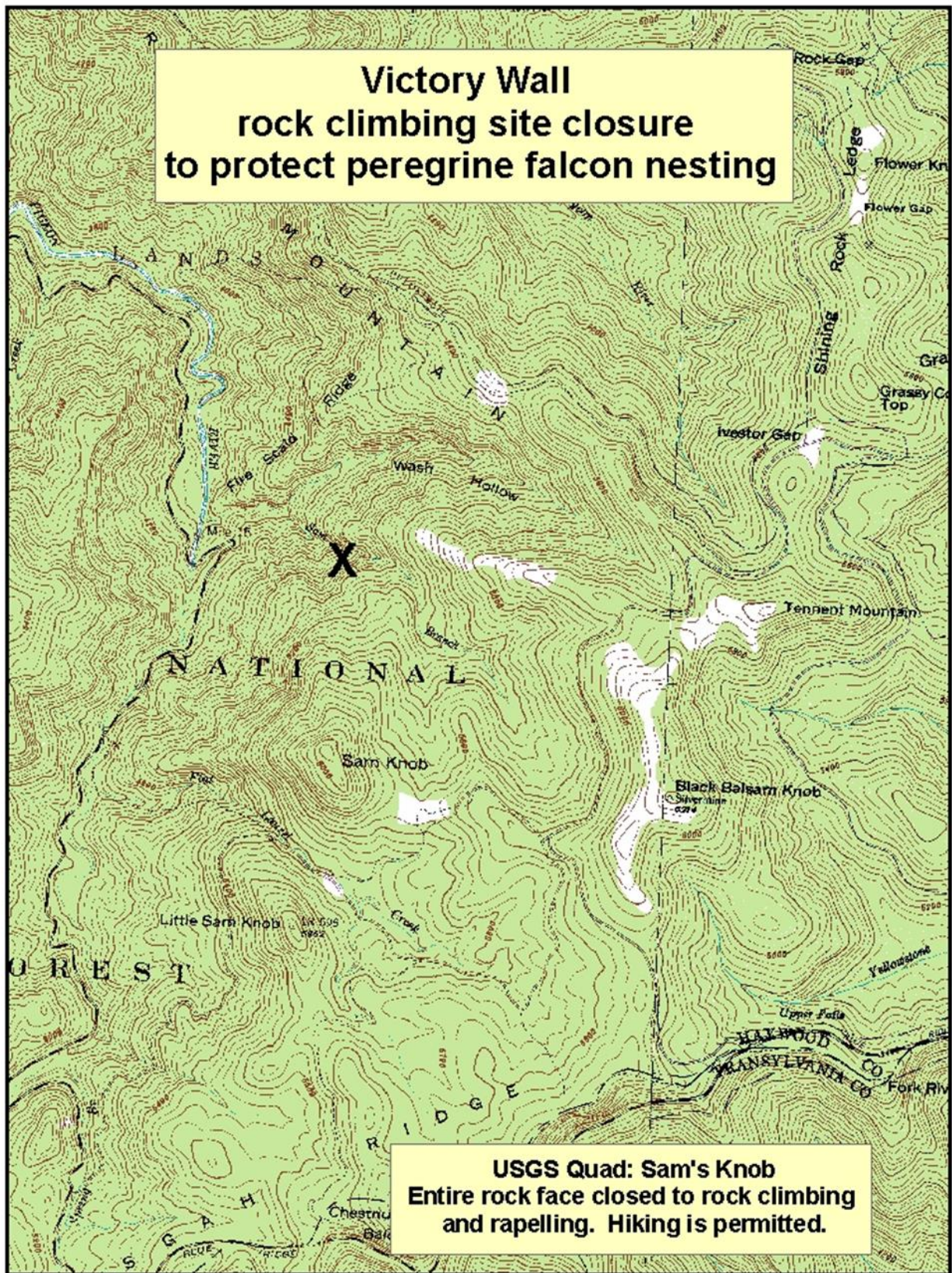


**Whiteside Mountain
rock climbing site closure
to protect peregrine falcon nesting**





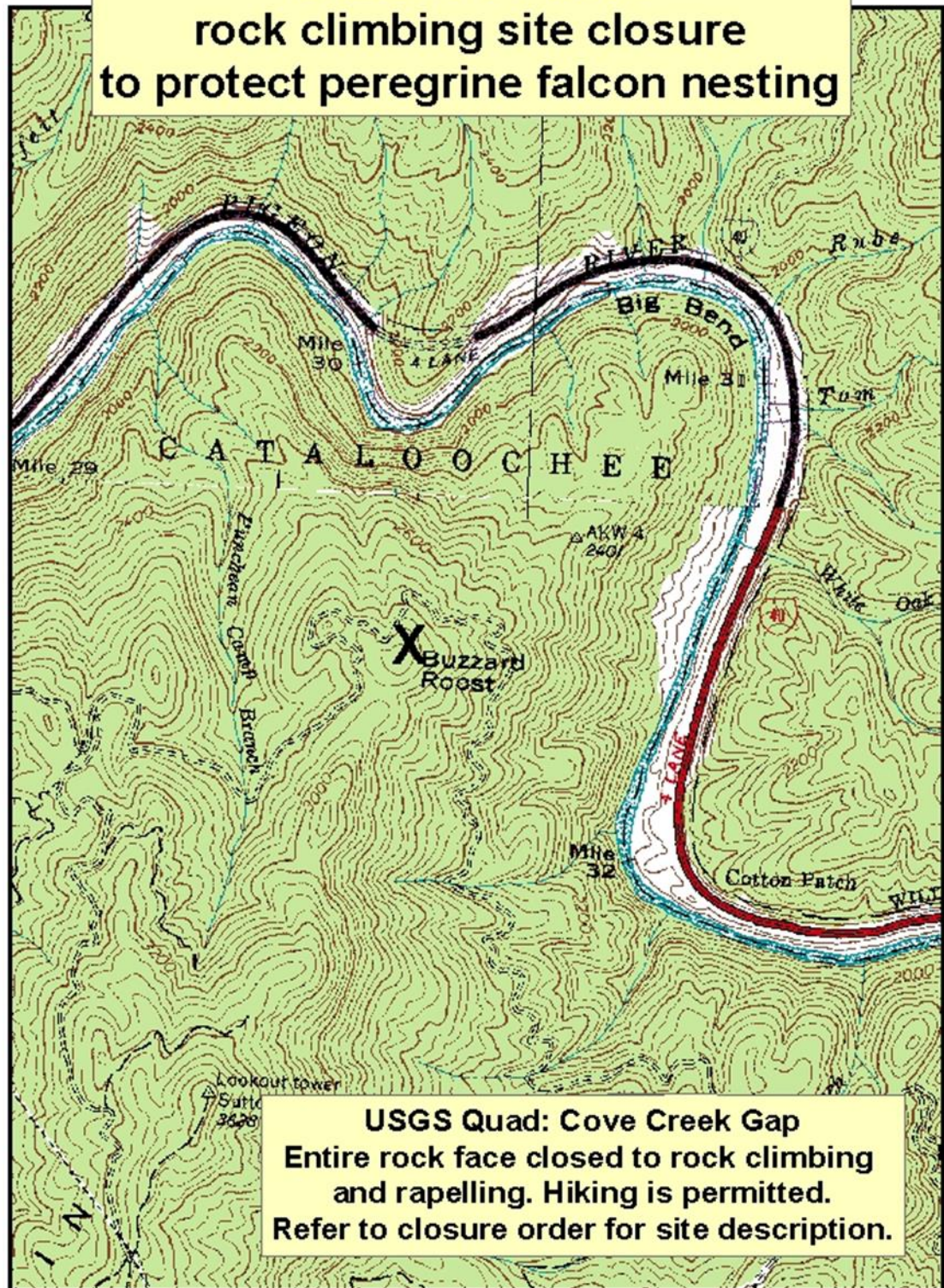
**Victory Wall
rock climbing site closure
to protect peregrine falcon nesting**

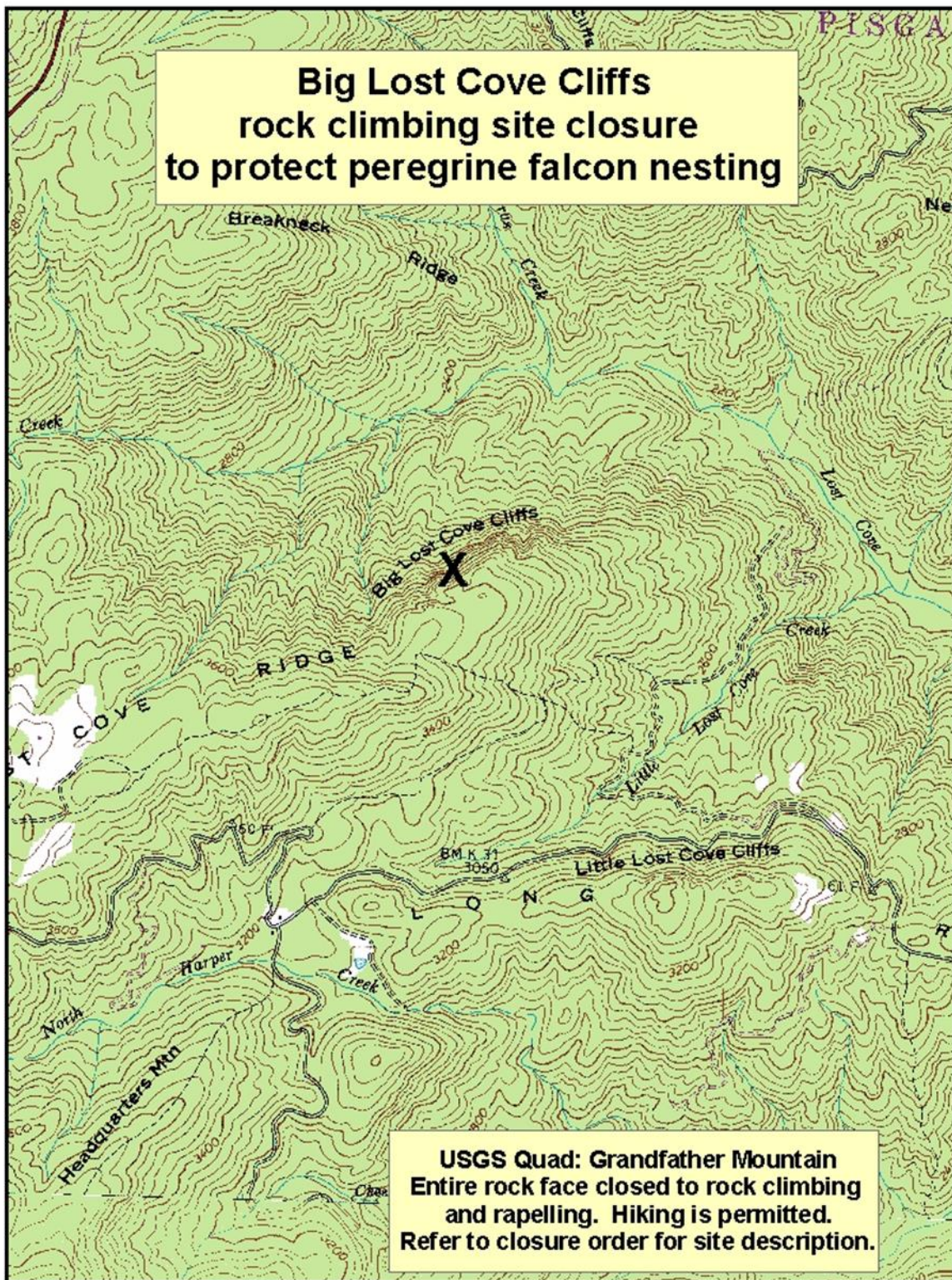


USGS Quad: Sam's Knob
**Entire rock face closed to rock climbing
and rappelling. Hiking is permitted.**



**Buzzard's Roost
rock climbing site closure
to protect peregrine falcon nesting**





**Whiterock Cliff
rock climbing site closure
to protect peregrine falcon nesting**

